Exploration work a Somnath and Pindara sites of Dwarka

184. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) Whether any systematic exploration work at Somnath and Pindara, contemporary sites of Dwarka, have been or are proposed to be carried out to ascertain the cause of submergence of the legendary city of Lord Krishna in the sea;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether the archaelogists, historians and marine experts have been associated with this study; and

(d) at what stage the matter stands at present?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI RAJMANGAL PANDE): (a) and (b) Exploration and excavations at Somnath and Pindara were carried out by various agencies in the past. The Emeritus Scientist, who carried underwater operations offshore near present Dwarka, was of the view that ancient Dwarka submerged into sea as a result of the rise in the sea level. The excavation at Somnath revealed a sequence of culture dating from *circa* second millennium B.C. to Kshatrapa-Gupta time the evidence found at pindara more or less coincides with the one found at Dwarka. Recently a Shiv-linga and its base has also been noticed on the site. In the underwater operations offshore Dwarka, stone-blocks, remains of ancient walls potteries of different periods and various types of antiquities including anchors have been noticed.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. The archaeologists, historians and other experts were associated with the underwater operations offshore Dwarka. The identification of submerged site in the sea near Dwarka with the ancient city of Lord Krishna has not been unanimously accepted by scholars.

Expenditure incurred by Air India and Indian Airlines on repatriation of Indian Nationals from West Asia

185. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what has been the expenditure incurred by Air India and Indian Airlines on the repatriation of Indian nationals from West Asia during the period from August, 1990 to January, 1991; and

(b) what amount has been collected todate by the Indian Airlines on account of the Gulf surcharge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN) (a) Air India has raised a claim of Rs. 227.21 crores for Gulf evacuation with their own and leased aircraft.

(b) Indian Airlines has collected an amount of Rs. 24 crores approximately on account of Gulf Evacuation surcharge upto 31st January, 1991.

Proposal to acquire New Aircraft by Air India

186. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India propose to acquire new aircrafts in the near future;

(b) if so, what types of aircraft are to be acquired and the number thereof;

(c) whether the engines for the same have also been finalised;

(d) what are the offers that have been received in this connection;

(e) which of the engines have been found to be most fuel efficient;

(f) whether any committee has been formed to evaluate the offers for engines; and